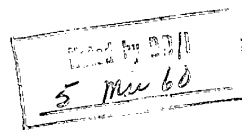


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UNITED STATES  
INFORMATION  
AGENCY

## Office of Research and Analysis

THE IMPACT OF THE CURRENT COLD-WAR DETENTE  
UPON TRENDS IN U.S. VERSUS U.S.S.R. STANDINGS

WE-61  
January, 1960

SURVEY RESEARCH STUDIES  
West European Public Opinion Barometer

## F O R E W O R D

Presented in this report are the results of a study designed to ascertain the trends in West European public opinion associated with the detente in U.S. - Soviet relations that followed President Eisenhower's invitation to Premier Khrushchev to visit the United States.

An earlier report described "Flash" reactions on a worldwide basis to the prospect of Premier Khrushchev's visit;<sup>1</sup> the present study had the more fundamental purpose of assaying the impact of this event and its aftermath upon some of the more significant dimensions of U.S. versus Soviet standing in West European public opinion.

The present report is based upon a few selected questions rather than a full size survey since it is offered as a brief interim picture in advance of a full scale balance sheet that will be timed to be maximally useful as guidance in preparations for the forthcoming Summit meeting.

The questions utilized were included on a "rider" basis in ongoing late November - early December surveys in the four countries studied, being conducted by the same responsible organizations who perform the usual USIA studies. While some of the sampling techniques are not wholly identical with those employed in USIA Barometer surveys they are sufficiently similar to permit of useful trend comparisons. The size of sample in the four countries in the latest survey ranged from 1258 cases in France to 691 cases in Italy.

In this as in other USIS studies the interviews were conducted under the auspices of the local survey institutes with no indication to respondents of U.S. interest.

The results from Italy in the present report are part of a more extensive study which will be separately reported, as will a special supplementary survey following President Eisenhower's visit; together with the pre-visit data this will form the basis of a before-after analysis of the impact of the event upon Italian opinion.

As readers of the Barometer series have been frequently reminded, differences between percentages in trend comparisons are only to be considered significant if they are appreciable enough to be reliably beyond chance variation. Conclusions drawn in the text take such considerations into account. Anyone interested in statistical details, or in further information on any other aspects of the present survey, is invited to consult the Survey Research Division, IRI, USIA.

Frequently throughout this and other Barometer reports readers will note that comparisons are made not in terms of the percentage favorable to the U.S. on a given issue but in terms of a net favorable figure -- favorable answers minus unfavorable answers. Such an index often provides a useful basis of comparison since it helps take into account the extent to which favorable responses are offset by unfavorable.

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<sup>1</sup> Special Report No. 11, "Flash survey of Reactions in Major World Opinion Centers to the Forthcoming Eisenhower-Khrushchev Visits," August 31, 1959, Official Use Only.

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H I G H L I G H T S

- ...The effect of the current cold war detente upon West European public opinion has apparently been to improve Soviet standing much more than that of the U.S. In consequence the U.S. lead is materially lessened though America continues far ahead in general esteem.
- ...In the peace dimension specifically, the U.S.S.R. has also cut into America's lead, and on the question of disarmament efforts has climbed to virtually a neck and neck status with the U.S. in both Great Britain and France.
- ...Despite slight improvements, net willingness to side with the Western cause in the struggle against the Communist powers appears, except in West Germany, almost as seriously deficient now as it was at the time of the Berlin crisis.
- ...Confidence in NATO continues limited in the net, particularly in France and Italy -- this on the basis of measurements taken before the open dispute over NATO at the Western Summit conference.
- ...The viewpoint continues to predominate among the West Europeans sampled that the U.S. does not treat European nations as equal partners in matters of common concern.
- ...Finally, the suggestive but not wholly conclusive indication from a series of trend measures of British opinion is that improvements associated with President Eisenhower's August 1958 visit disappeared within the space of a few months. This raises questions -- in need of further research -- about the durability of such impacts.

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THAW IN COLD WAR ACCOMPANIED BY SHARP DECLINE IN ADVERSE SENTIMENT TOWARD THE USSR AND KHRUSHCHEV...

The most striking trend in West European attitudes associated with the current relaxation in cold war tensions is a sharp rise in esteem for the USSR and for Premier Khrushchev. The result is not for the most part to create a predominance of favorable opinion, but rather to greatly reduce what had been a heavy predominance of adverse sentiment toward the Soviet Union and its most publicized representative.

"Please use this card to tell me your feelings about various countries. How about...?"

#### OPINION ABOUT THE U.S.S.R.

No. of cases	Great Britain			West Germany		France		Italy		
	Oct.	Sept.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Apr.	Nov.
	'58	'59	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59	'59
	(611)	(1000)	(1000)	(610)	(1258)	(624)	(1070)	(635)	(1076)	(691)
Very good opinion	1%	3%	3%	-%	1%	1%	3%	13%	7%	12%
Good opinion	9	10	21	4	6	8	14	16	13	20
Neither good nor bad opinion	28	43	30	18	34	26	44	18	19	23
Bad opinion	27	23	22	43	32	28	19	24	23	17
Very bad opinion	19	13	11	23	14	18	4	19	24	12
No opinion	16	8	13	12	13	19	16	10	14	16
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable <sup>1</sup>	-36	-26	-9	-62	-39	-37	-6	-14	-27	3

"Now I want to ask your feelings about political leaders in various countries. Please use this card to tell me what your feelings are about them. How about...?"

#### OPINION OF PREMIER KHRUSHCHEV

No. of cases	Great Britain			West Germany		France		Italy	
	Oct.	Sept.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.
	'58	'59	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59
	(587)	(1000)	(1000)	(585)	(1258)	(596)	(1070)	(637)	(691)
Very good opinion	1%	3%	2%	-%	1%	1%	4%	11%	17%
Good opinion	10	15	28	4	9	5	20	13	24
Neither good nor bad opinion	26	39	28	16	33	24	37	15	20
Bad opinion	25	23	20	39	30	24	17	20	14
Very bad opinion	22	10	9	23	14	24	5	18	9
No opinion	16	10	13	18	13	22	17	23	16
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	-36	-15	1	-58	-34	-42	2	-14	18

With the exception of one instance in Great Britain, esteem for the USSR has never been higher than at present in USIA Barometer surveys extending back to 1954.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Net Favorable" equals total favorable opinion minus total unfavorable, and is simply a convenient index to indicate prevailing direction of sentiment.

<sup>2</sup> In the interest of brevity survey results prior to October, 1958 are omitted from the tabular presentations. Readers interested in more extended comparisons may refer to West European Barometer report No. 57, "Current Trends in U.S. Versus Soviet Standing in Western Europe," Confidential.

U.S. CONTINUES FAR AHEAD OF U.S.S.R. IN WEST EUROPEAN ESTEEM, BUT LEAD NOW LESS THAN BEFORE PRESENT DETENTE IN U.S.-U.S.S.R. RELATIONS...

In contrast, study of the trends in U.S. standing and that of President Eisenhower reveals loss as well as gain, and in the overall nothing like the striking upsurge evident in the latest Soviet standings. In consequence, while the U.S. continues to remain far ahead of the U.S.S.R. in West European esteem its lead is distinctly less than it was before the present detente in U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations.

#### OPINION ABOUT THE U.S.

	Great Britain			West Germany		France		Italy		
	Oct. '58	Sept. '59	Nov. '59	Oct. '58	Nov. '59	Oct. '58	Nov. '59	Oct. '58	Apr. '59	Nov. '59
No. of cases	(611)	(1000)	(1000)	(610)	(1258)	(624)	(1070)	(635)	(1076)	(691)
Very good opinion	15%	34%	18%	11%	15%	4%	8%	29%	30%	32%
Good opinion	46	43	45	57	52	33	31	38	38	39
Neither	19	18	21	18	20	37	41	12	14	13
Bad opinion	8	2	7	3	2	12	7	9	6	4
Very bad opinion	1	1	1	*	*	2	17	5	3	1
No opinion	11	2	8	11	11	12	12	7	9	11
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	52	74	55	65	65	23	15	53	59	66

#### OPINION OF PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

No. of cases	(587)	(1000)	(1000)	(585)	(1258)	(596)	(1070)	(637)	(691)
Very good opinion	21%	42%	21%	15%	20%	7%	13%	24%	35%
Good opinion	48	36	45	52	54	37	41	35	39
Neither	18	18	19	17	13	35	30	13	Not Asked
Bad opinion	7	2	6	2	2	5	3	8	4
Very bad opinion	1	*	2	*	*	1	1	3	1
No opinion	5	2	7	14	11	15	12	17	11
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	61	74	58	65	72	38	50	48	69

Without gainsaying the fact that apparently as a result of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. detente the Soviet Union has cut into the U.S. lead in esteem, the point should not be overlooked that with good opinions of the U.S. already quite widespread (except in France), further gains undoubtedly become more difficult to achieve. Soviet esteem, with vastly greater room for improvement, hence might be expected to reap greater advantage from any favorable turn in the East-West climate.

Focusing upon the individual country results preceding, it may be seen that a gain in esteem for the U.S. and for President Eisenhower is most in evidence in Italy, the country which was anticipating an imminent visit on the part of the President.<sup>1</sup> On the minus side a notable recent decline in net favorable opinion -- both for the U.S. and for President Eisenhower -- has occurred in Great Britain. This decline, it will be observed, has taken place since September, 1959 and returns the current British level of esteem to a point very close to the October, 1958 level. Since the September survey was conducted in the wake of President Eisenhower's visit to London, what may have happened is that the visit inspired a rise in general esteem which subsequently, in the space of a few months, fell back to its original level. Thus, the durability of such an impact is open to question, although more research is needed for any firm conclusion on this point.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The effect of this visit on trends in Italian attitudes will be the subject of a separate report.

<sup>2</sup> The indication is suggestive but cannot be taken as conclusive because the samplings in the three British surveys were not wholly comparable, and because one cannot be certain of the extent to which influences other than the Eisenhower visit entered to affect the pattern of returns. For more details in this connection see Western European Barometer No.60, "The Impact of President Eisenhower's Visit on British Public Opinion," October, 1959, Confidential.

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By way of corroborating the inference that the present detente in East-West relations is the factor primarily at work in influencing current trends in U.S. versus U.S.S.R. standings, it is instructive to note the results of some additional more specific inquiries that were posed in the Italian survey. Again one can observe the pattern of improved standing for both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., with a larger change in viewpoint for the latter. Next, through the medium of a follow-up open inquiry, it becomes very evident that the primary cause for the shifts in sentiment are considerations associated with the current relaxation of East-West tensions.

"Now talking particularly about foreign affairs, have you a favorable or unfavorable impression of what the Soviet Government (American Government) has been doing about foreign affairs recently? Very or only somewhat?"

No. of cases	<u>Soviet Government</u>		<u>American Government</u>	
	<u>Italy</u>		<u>Italy</u>	
	May '57 <sup>1</sup> (1269)	Nov. '59 (691)	Oct. '58 (637)	Nov. '59 (691)
Very favorable	7%	20%	16%	28%
Somewhat favorable	6	22	12	16
Somewhat unfavorable	7	6	4	4
Very unfavorable	37	5	14	4
No opinion	<u>43</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>48</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	-31	31	10	36

"What has the Soviet (American) Government done recently to give you this impression?"

#### Reasons for Favorable Impressions of Soviet Actions

The relaxation of international tension, their good will in diminishing international tension, the discontinuance of the cold war	16%
The visit of Premier Khrushchev to the States	10
Their favorable attitude toward general disarmament	4
The visit of Premier Khrushchev to various countries	3
Khrushchev's initiative in promoting exchanges of views among heads of State	2
Their technical and scientific progress	2
Other answers	5
No specific answers given	<u>5</u> 2
	47%

#### Reasons for Favorable Impressions of American Actions

They really make efforts toward relaxation of international tension and peace	15%
For the help given to other countries	7
Their welcoming Premier Khrushchev in the States	6
Their favorable attitude toward a Summit conference	1
They really want disarmament	1
Other answers	7
No specific answers	<u>8</u>
	45%

<sup>1</sup> This question was not asked about Soviet foreign policy in the October 1958 survey and in consequence a May 1957 figure is used as a basis of comparison here. Probably the net favorable figure would have been somewhat higher in October of 1958, but not enough to affect the conclusion of a larger Soviet than U.S. gain with the current detente.

<sup>2</sup> These percentages add up to more than 44 per cent somewhat to very favorable in each case because a few respondents cited more than one reason.

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MORE SOVIET THAN U.S. GAINS ON EFFORTS FOR PEACE, THOUGH THE U.S. CONTINUES WELL AHEAD...

Just as in general esteem, Soviet Russia appears to have enhanced its standing as a protagonist of peace in all three countries for which current trend measures are available.<sup>1</sup> The rise is most notable in Italy where now the viewpoint definitely predominates that Soviet Russia is doing all it should to prevent war.

"Is Soviet Russia doing all it should do to prevent a new world war?"

No. of cases	Great Britain			West Germany		Italy		
	Oct.	Sept.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Apr.	Nov.
	'58	'59	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59	'59
	(587)	(1000)	(1000)	(585)	(1258)	(637)	(1076)	(691)
Yes, Russia is	16%	23%	24%	10%	15%	25%	25%	42%
No, Russia is not	62	53	46	74	60	38	40	21
No opinion	22	24	30	16	25	37	35	37
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	-46	-30	-22	-64	-45	-13	-15	21

U.S. gains on this issue appear to be comparable in extent to those of the U.S.S.R. in Italy and in West Germany, but are conspicuously absent in Great Britain. Here the same adverse trend that was observed before is in evidence -- a rise in September in conjunction with the Eisenhower visit, and a decline in the latest survey to almost precisely the pre-visit level.

"Is America doing all it should do to prevent a new world war?"

Yes, America is	41%	53%	38%	43%	50%	52%	54%	65%
No, America is not	44	32	38	41	29	28	19	8
No opinion	15	15	24	16	21	20	27	27
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	-3	21	0	2	21	24	35	57

<sup>1</sup> French trends cannot be considered on the general peace index as the question was not included in the latest French survey.

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ON SPECIFIC QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT EFFORTS U.S. STANDING HAS DECLINED TO VIRTUALLY NECK AND NECK WITH U.S.S.R. IN GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE...

An unspecific question like that preceding is, of course, likely to be strongly conditioned by considerations of general esteem which heavily favor the U.S. How does the U.S. stack up against the U.S.S.R. in the peace dimension on a more concrete and hence presumably a purer test? The results to the question below, bearing specifically upon comparative efforts to achieve general disarmament, reveal a far less reassuring picture than that preceding and one that has deteriorated over the past year. In the latest survey the U.S. has declined to virtually a neck and neck position with the U.S.S.R. in Great Britain and in France; retains a limited lead in Italy, and only in West Germany has any considerable lead over the Soviet Union in efforts toward general disarmament.

"In your opinion, which country - the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. - is making the more serious efforts at the present time toward general disarmament?"

	<u>Great Britain</u>		<u>West Germany</u>		<u>France</u>		<u>Italy</u>	
	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>
	<u>(587)</u>	<u>(1000)</u>	<u>(585)</u>	<u>(1258)</u>	<u>(624)</u>	<u>(1000)</u>	<u>(637)</u>	<u>(691)</u>
No. of cases								
U.S.	28%	20%	32%	35%	21%	16%	37%	32%
U.S.S.R.	10	17	3	6	7	11	17	14
Both equal (Vol.)	10	22	10	16	7	19	8	26
Neither (Vol.)	38	20	38	25	45	33	21	9
No opinion	<u>14</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>19</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Net Favorable	18	3	29	29	14	5	20	18

The latest measurements above were obtained before the recent U.S. announcement that it was reserving the right to resume atomic tests in the future. The impact of this announcement upon West European trends remains to be seen.

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DESPITE SOME SLIGHT IMPROVEMENTS, NET WILLINGNESS TO SIDE ACTIVELY WITH THE WESTERN CAUSE CONTINUES LOW EXCEPT IN GERMANY...

It is open to debate whether the extent of "neutralist" sentiments in Western Europe can be expected to be lower in time of crisis with a closing of ranks so as to speak in the face of peril, or lower in a time of lessened tension when the danger associated with taking sides is less. In any event, the indication from the pattern of returns below, to a query tapping identification with the Western camp in the struggle against the Communist powers, is that solidarity leaves a great deal to be desired under either set of circumstances. Except in West Germany, identification with the Western cause was seriously deficient during the time of the Berlin crisis, and despite slight gains continues low in the present period of detente.

"At the present time, do you personally think that (survey country) should be on the side of the West, on the side of the East, or on neither side?"

No. of cases	Great Britain		West Germany		France		Italy	
	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.
	'58	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59
	(611)	(1000)	(610)	(1258)	(624)	(1070)	(635)	(691)
Side of the West	49%	45%	63%	64%	26%	24%	31%	34%
Side of the East	2	3	1	1	4	4	11	4
Neither side	38	33	29	24	57	48	44	41
No opinion	11	19	7	11	13	24	14	21
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	9	9	33	39	-35	-28	-24	-11

One should not, of course, make too much of the results of a simple verbal measure of this kind. But even if taken as no more than an index of psychological morale the indications do not suggest any strong spirit of common cause in the Western camp.

<sup>1</sup> It is recognized that the East-West terminology in this question has logical deficiencies if taken literally. On the basis of experience this phrasing has been retained for trend purposes, however, because it is in common parlance in Western Europe and appears to reflect the extent of identification with the U.S. side in the struggle with the Communist powers. Except for a moderate departure in Italy almost the same results have been obtained in an earlier check comparison with a side-with-the-U.S./side-with-the-USSR phrasing.

## EXTENT OF CONFIDENCE IN NATO REMAINS LIMITED IN THE NET, PARTICULARLY IN FRANCE AND ITALY...

In the midst of the current relaxation of East-West tension the extent of confidence in NATO does not appear to have departed markedly one way or the other from levels existent at the time of the preceding survey in October of 1958. The latest measures (which it should be understood were obtained before the open dispute about NATO at the recent Western Summit Conference) suggest a slight rise in confidence in Great Britain over the past year, and a slight drop in France. On the average, however, the extent of confidence in NATO has failed to rise in the past year from what must be considered a rather limited level.

"Have you heard or read of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - NATO, that is?"

"In light of all you have heard up to the present time, how much confidence do you have in the effectiveness of NATO as a defense organization for Western Europe - a great deal, some, not very much, or none at all?" (Asked only of those who had heard of NATO)

	<u>Great Britain</u>		<u>West Germany</u>		<u>France</u>		<u>Italy</u>	
	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>
No. of cases	(1198)	(1000)	(1195)	(1258)	(1213)	(1070)	(1272)	(691)
Yes, have heard	77%	78%	81%	76%	59%	78%	75%	73%
No, have not heard	23	22	19	24	41	22	25	27
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	<u>Great Britain</u>		<u>West Germany</u>		<u>France</u>		<u>Italy</u>	
	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>	<u>'58</u>	<u>'59</u>
No. of cases	(611)	(1000)	(610)	(957)	(624)	(1070)	(635)	(691)
Great deal	14%	15%	21%	18%	5%	3%	11%	11%
Some	25	28	26	26	17	19	23	22
Not very much	20	18	16	17	17	20	15	16
None at all	8	5	6	4	6	10	13	10
No opinion	9	12	10	11	14	26	14	14
	76%	78%	79%	76%	59%	78%	76%	73%
Net Favorable	11	20	25	23	-1	-8	6	7

It is interesting to note in the awareness figures above that the proportion of Frenchmen who profess to have heard of NATO has apparently risen from 59 to 78 per cent over the past year. If this gain is confirmed in later surveys it means that France, after a considerable period of running behind, has now attained the same level of awareness as exists in the other three countries. However, the increase in extent of awareness does not appear to add up to any increase in favorable reactions, in view of the fact that the latest net favorable figure on French confidence in NATO is if anything less favorable than before.

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## VIEWPOINT CONTINUES TO PREDOMINATE THAT U.S. DOES NOT TREAT EUROPEAN NATIONS AS EQUAL PARTNERS...

The great sensitivity of the West European powers to their treatment by the U.S. in matters of common concern is well attested to by the persistent absence of any predominant acknowledgement of being treated as an equal partner. The current picture in this respect is definitely no better than it has been, and in Great Britain has recently worsened with the disappearance of a gain associated with the Eisenhower visit in September of last year.

"Do you feel (survey country) is treated as an equal partner by the U.S. in affairs that concern them both, or don't you think so?"

No. of cases	Great Britain			West Germany		Italy	
	Oct.	Sept.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.
	'58	'59	'59	'58	'59	'58	'59
	(587)	(1000)	(1000)	(585)	(1258)	(637)	(691)
Equal partner	38%	43%	31%	43%	37%	21%	17%
Not equal partner	51	46	49	39	40	45	45
Qualified answers	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
No opinion	11	7	20	18	23	34	38
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Favorable	-13	-3	-18	4	-3	-24	-28

One should not make too much or too little of the above figures. It may well be that a nation which is the leader in power cannot hope to persuade any overwhelming proportion of the people of less powerful nations that their countries are being treated as equal partners in matters of common concern. So the less than gratifying absolute levels of approval in the figures above should perhaps not be taken too seriously. However the U.S. can nonetheless do better or poorer at this central job of international public relations, and the comparative ratings above, both within and between countries, help provide a measure of the success of this effort.

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